

Cathedral  
St. Augustine, Florida  
St. John's Co.

HABS No. 15-7  
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PHOTOGRAPH  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 15

REDUCED COPIES OF DETAILED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Bernard W. Close, District Officer  
1005 Bisbee Bldg, Jacksonville, Fla.

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CATHEDRAL  
St. Augustine  
St. Johns County

Owner: Catholic Church.

Date of Erection: 1791 (begun).

Architect and Builder: Officials of the Spanish Government.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: One.

Materials of Construction: Coquina concrete.

Other Existing Records: See text.<sup>1</sup>

Additional Data: See following pages.

<sup>1</sup> See Hamlin, T.F., The American Spirit in Architecture, 21.

THE CATHEDRAL  
St. Augustine, Florida.

Work on the Catholic Cathedral, located in St. Augustine, Florida, was started in 1791 by officials of the Spanish Government. It was completed and dedicated in 1797.

Father Hassett was Chaplain and Father O'Reilly assistant and military Chaplain, when work on the new church was begun.

The first building consisted of the oblong quadrangle, 120 X 42 feet, which forms the Nave of the present building. Round windows, sixteen feet from the ground, provided ventilation. The upper Gallery was for the choir and lower one for negroes.

The original façade remains, and is Moorish in design. There are four oval openings in this façade bearing bells that were formerly used for the Angelus and for important feasts. The largest bell is inscribed with the words: "Sante Joseph, Ora pro Nobis. 1682." The Transept and Tower were additions after the fire of 1887.

The stained-glass windows represent scenes in the life of St. Augustine. Reading from the front on the west they are:

1. Baptism of St. Augustine by St. Ambrose.
2. St. Augustine and St. Alipius.
3. St. Augustine with St. Monica.
4. Ordination of St. Augustine.
5. Death of St. Monica.
6. St. Augustine healing the sick.
7. Consecration of St. Augustine.
8. St. Augustine Preaching.
9. St. Augustine reading rules of his Order.
10. St. Augustine by the seashore.
11. Miracle at shrine of St. Stephen in Hippo.
12. Ecstasy of St. Augustine.

St. Frances Borgia was general of the Society of Jesus and St. Pius V was reigning Pope when Menendez undertook his expedition. Their <sup>e</sup>status<sub>A</sub> on the main altar commemorate this. Status<sup>e</sup><sub>A</sub> of St. Augustine and St. Monica, his mother, are in the niches near the sanctuary.

The exterior walls are of solid, cast Coquina concrete, three feet thick; the roof is covered with a flat clay tile and the floors<sup>are</sup><sub>A</sub> laid with beautiful square pattern tile of blues, reds, yellows and browns.

Reviewed 1936 by H.C.F.

Edward W. Gore

## AMERICA'S OLDEST RECORD?

## A Baptismal Entry of 1594

BY ALBERT MANUCY,  
JUNIOR HISTORICAL TECHNICIAN,  
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It was a ceremonious landing on that day 375 years ago when Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés set foot on Florida soil at Saint Augustine. Chaplain Mendoza said the first mass of record in this country, Avilés read his patent before the assembled company of soldiers and Indians, and then, as the explorer Ponce de León had done nearby in 1513, he claimed the sunny land for Spain. That was September 8, 1565.

With ecclesiastical pomp and ceremony, *La Fiesta Grande* was celebrated this September at the outworks of old Castillo de San Marcos, now Fort Marion National Monument, in commemoration of that first mass and of the birth of America's oldest city. Combined was the observance of a day of prayer set aside by Presidential proclamation "for beseeching the Ruler of the Universe to bless our Republic, to make us reverently grateful for our heritage and firm in its defense, and to grant to this land and to the troubled world a righteous peace."

Of special religious and historical interest during a three-day program, attend-

*En vis del... defunto d. Año de mill y quinientos  
y noventa y quatro años... Diego Scobar...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...  
... de la Florida...*

*Diego Scobar  
1594*

The baptism of María Yiménes is the first entry of the first page of the Saint Augustine Parish Records in the archives of the Catholic Cathedral of Saint Augustine, Florida. It is dated June 25, 1594. Parts of the script of Diego Scobar were re-inked in the above photograph to provide clearer reproduction.

OVER

ed by a long list of Catholic dignitaries from throughout the nation, was the transcription and translation by the Service of what appears to be the oldest European original manuscript that is both native to and on deposit in any archives of this country. It is the earliest of the extant records<sup>1</sup> for the Catholic Parish of Saint Augustine, a baptismal entry dated June 25, 1594. Earlier records appear to have been lost, due probably to such unfortunate incidents as Francis Drake's visit in 1586 when virtually the entire settlement was looted and burned. The 1594 baptismal sheet was originally about 8 x 10 inches in size. It is somewhat smaller today because of the ravages of insects, the passage of nearly three and a half centuries, and long handling. The transcription and translation of the entry follow:

En 25 dias del mes de junio de Año de mil y quys

On the 25th day of the month of June of the Year one thousand five hundred

y noventa y quatro años yo diego scobar de sambrana  
and ninety-four I diego scobar de sambrana

cura y Vic<sup>o</sup> destas provincias de la florida, ciudad  
curate and vicar of these provinces of florida, city

Maria

Maria

y fuerte de s.<sup>t</sup> agustin, por El maestro, don fr anto<sup>2</sup>  
and fort of st. augustine, for The maestro, fray anto<sup>2</sup>

nio dias de saizado opo de Cuba, y por ssercani a<sup>2</sup>destas,  
nio dias de saizado bishop of Cuba, and for the neighborhood of these

provincias, baptize puse olio y crisma, A maria  
provinces, christened and anointed with holy oil and chrisam,<sup>4</sup> maria

hija legitima de Sr Ximenes de la queba, y de ma  
legitimate daughter of Senor Ximenes de la queba, and of ma

ria melendes su mujer, fueron sus padrinos, Adrian --  
ria melendes his wife, her godparents were, Adrian --

de canizales y maria Ruiz su mujer todos Xzs<sup>5</sup>  
de canizales and maria Ruiz his wife all Christians<sup>5</sup>

desta ciudad En ffe de la qual lo firme de  
of this city in witness whereof I signed

mi ne; ff<sup>o</sup> ut supra.

my name; according to that above.

diego scobar  
diego scobar

de sambrana Vic<sup>o</sup> rubric<sup>6</sup>  
de sambrana Vicar rubric<sup>6</sup>

With slight variations, virtually all the baptismal entries employ the same literary formula. In 1594 Saint Augustine was a tiny settlement of not more than 300 or so souls, but the records indicate that these few inhabitants were a prolific people. From June to November there were six infant baptisms: four girls, María, Agustina, Francisca, and Isabel; and two boys, Antonio and Mateo. As shown in the transcription, the young lady with the distinction of the first recorded baptism was María Ximénes, daughter of Señor Ximénes de la Queba and Señora María Menéndez.

<sup>1</sup>Sixteen volumes of the parish records were recently treated by the National Archives to assure their preservation. The process was simple, though tedious: after cleaning, each sheet was laminated between transparent sheets of acetate. Photostatic copies were made.

<sup>2</sup>Emendation where manuscript is damaged. <sup>3</sup>Title of respect. <sup>4</sup>A sacred oil.

<sup>5</sup>The Spanish abbreviation is obscure, but probably signifies *Christianos*.

<sup>6</sup>No punctuation or capitalization has been supplied.

